

LONG ESSAY QUESTION #2

The long essay question requires students to do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a **historically defensible thesis** or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a **broader historical context** relevant to the prompt.
- **Support** an argument in response to the prompt using **specific and relevant** examples of evidence.
- Demonstrate a **complex understanding** of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.
- Students must select **one** of the three long essay questions. Each question focuses on the same reasoning process, but historical developments and processes in different time periods.

The first option focuses primarily on historical developments or processes between 1450 and 1700, the second primarily on historical developments or processes between 1648 and 1914, and the third primarily on historical developments or processes between 1815 and 2001.

Evaluate the most significant effect of the protestant reformation during the period 1450-1648.

Structuring your essay:

It is recommended that you spend 40 minutes planning and writing your essay. In this essay, you will want to create a strong thesis statement that makes a clear statement about the MOST significant effect of the Protestant Reformation. In essence, you will want to rank the effects from most important to lesser importance. In general, you should try for three historical examples that you can base the body of the essay on, each example will be approximately a paragraph in length.

You can choose to begin the essay with a description of the broader historical context. Very simply: Ask yourself, what events led to the reformation? If you can, in a paragraph, discuss the factors that led to Luther writing the 95 Theses and then connect it to your thesis. You can also begin your essay with the thesis and then discuss the events leading to the reformation, but both of these requirements should be in the beginning of the essay.

Once you have completed the **Thesis** and **Contextualization**, begin the “body” of your essay using the three examples you stated in your thesis. Using your knowledge of the period, and **specific facts** that you can recall, explain **WHY and HOW** these examples are significant. It is not enough to describe them, you must explain the **WHY and HOW**.

The last paragraph of your essay you should try to demonstrate complex understanding. Complex Understanding refers to a modification or qualification of your argument. It may be as simple as saying “On the other hand some argue the most significant effect is...” or it could include a contrast and comparison to another religious reform like the Council of Trent or Vatican II.

You do not need to write a conclusion, but if you have time to rewrite your thesis, using different words, it is another opportunity to make sure you get the thesis point, in case you do not get it the first time.

Thesis Examples that would earn a point:

*The protestant reformation had a variety of effects on Europe, but the **most significant effect** was the political effect that allowed the ruler of the country to choose the religion of their country, the social effect of Europe not being under control of the Catholic church and rise of Calvinism which led to the growth of economic power of the Dutch.*

The most significant effect of the protestant reformation was the emergence of a more secular Europe that came from the results of the 30 Years War, and the reforms from the Catholic Reformation.

Thesis Examples that would NOT earn a point:

The effects protestant reformation led to many political, social and economic changes in Europe.

The most significant effect of the Protestant Reformation was religious change in Europe.

Contextualization:

Description of the conditions that led to Luther posting his 95 Theses, may include:

- Selling of indulgences, and the role of Johann Tetzel.
- Abuses of the church including the practices of simony and nepotism at the higher levels of the church.
- The role of Erasmus, Thomas More, and other humanists by calling into question the practices and teachings of the church. Also, the updated translations of the Bible, which corrected many mistakes in translations from Latin and Greek.

Evidence:

The essay MAY include explanations and analysis of some of the following:

- Luther's emphasis on the Bible as the sole source of contact with God. Led to a rise in literacy in protestant areas. The differing beliefs of Lutherans and Catholics including the idea that faith alone is the pathway to salvation, reduction of the sacraments, including a rejection of transubstantiation.
- Further divisions of the christain faith including the teachings of Zwingli and more significantly John Calvin. The concept of predestination, and its possible effect on the economic growth of the north, i.e. the protestant work ethic. Also the strict code that led these puritans to attempt to control the behavior of the individuals most notably in Geneva.
- The emergence of the anabaptist movement calling for adult baptism, their radical beliefs led to conflict with both Catholics and Protestants.
- Henry VIII's break with Rome and the establishment of the Anglican Church, with the passage of the Act of Supremacy making the monarch head of both church and state.

- The peasants revolt in Germany and the subsequent brutal repression of that revolt.
- Descriptions and analysis of the French Wars of Religion including the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, Henry of Navarre and the 30 years War as all can be used as results of the protestant reformation. Included in this discussion, could be the Peace of Westphalia and the fact that future wars were generally not caused by religion, but by other factors. The beginnings of a secular society.
- The Catholic Reformation, including a description of the Catholic reaction such as the Council of Trent, its reforms, and the founding of the Jesuits.

Analysis and Reasoning:

To earn this point you will need to demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development in the prompt, using evidence to corroborate (confirm or support), qualify or modify an argument. (Examples)

Nuance:

- Although the most significant effect of the Protestant Reformation was the terrible bloody wars that followed, there were other aspects that affected Europe as well. An important outcome of the Protestant Reformation was the Peace of Augsburg, which allowed the head of the state to determine the religion that was to be practiced. This most significantly applied to the German states, allowing for a measure of independence for the ruler. However, it did cause major issues in society by forcing those individuals who did not convert to leave their homeland and move to a state that was of their religious choice.

Effects on Different Countries:

- Most of the significant changes that came about as a result of the Protestant Reformation have been European wide. However, each country had its own unique reaction to the reformation. For example, in France, Huguenots (French Protestants) emerged as a significant group in the predominantly Catholic Country. After Henri of Navarre became king, who was himself a Huguenot, he issued the Edict of Nantes which granted the Huguenots substantial rights within France including the ability to enclose their towns and set up their own religious schools. In primarily Catholic countries like Spain and the Italian states, the power and influence of the Catholic Church remained intact and the teachings of Luther and Calvin did not take root.

Continuity and change:

- Although the Protestant Reformation had effects on Europe, in many ways the life of the majority of people in Europe stayed very much the same. For peasants, the poverty and repression they faced did not change for several centuries. The old feudal system existed in most of Europe and the poor were still required to fulfill their unpaid duties to their lord, an example being the corvee in France, which required peasants to contribute 30 days labor for road construction. If you were born a peasant, you died a peasant.

Continuity and Change:

- As much as the protestant reform reformation brought about huge changes in many aspects of European life, many things remained the same and in some cases regressed for women. In Catholic countries women's roles remained the same in that women were primarily expected to be wives and mothers. But they also had the ability to join the church as nuns and have some measure of what could be called a career. An example being St. Theresa of

Avila who founded several convents throughout Europe. In protestant countries there was no official role for women in the Lutheran or Calvinist church. The expectation was for women to fulfill the roles of wives and mothers.